

The Washington Star

'Counter-Spy' Aide Denies Direct Link In Death of Agent

By Jim Adams
Associated Press

A co-editor of "Counter-Spy" concedes the publication of CIA station chief Richard S. Welch's name could have figured in his assassination in Greece, but he denies any direct connection.

The co-editor of the quarterly, Doug Porter, contends Welch was so widely known in Greece to be the CIA station chief that the assassins did not need news disclosures of the name to get it.

But he said in an interview that publication of Welch's name last month by the English-language Athens News could have led to his assassination a week later.

"And it's conceivable they (the Athens News) could have gotten it from us," Porter said.

BUT HE INSISTED even that would not link Counter-Spy directly to Welch's killing because it had only reprinted the fact that he was CIA station chief in Peru. Porter said the quarterly got that information from a South American newspaper and a 1967 directory published in Germany.

"We didn't even know he was in Athens until he was killed," Porter said. "If they got it from us they would have had to put it together with something else."

"It's a really sad thing that he was killed," Porter said. "We're not promoting terrorism."

Welch, who was shot down by three masked gunmen in front of his home in Athens Dec. 23, is to be buried Tuesday in Arlington National Cemetery.

COUNTER-SPY is published by a nonprofit group called Fifth Estate Security Education, set up three years ago by former intelligence agents and Vietnam war protesters.

The 13-member advisory board includes Chicago defendant David Dellinger and Anthony Russo, who was associated with Daniel Ellsberg in the Pentagon Papers case.

The paper is produced by a staff of about seven, including Porter, a former editor of a San Diego counterculture newspaper who supplements his income now by tending bar three times a week.

He said Counter-Spy's purpose in publishing the names of senior CIA agents, including Welch, in nearly 100 countries last year was to expose and neutralize covert political operations. Despite the notoriety the once-obscure publication has received since Welch's death, Porter said "Counter-Spy" will continue publishing CIA agents' names, about 70 in the next issue in February.

"THERE WAS A lot of mulling over," he said. "We feel uneasy about it. But we're still going to do it."

Agents' lives are not endangered, Porter contended, because the quarterly only reprints names already publicly exposed.

He said the names, including the first 100, are only of agents under light cover. He said "anyone with a third-grade education" can pick these names out of U.S. embassy telephone books by checking positions normally held by

CIA agents against the State Department biography that shows what kind of work they have done in the past.

THE QUARTERLY will not publish names of agents under "deep cover," Porter said.

He said Fifth Estate wants to expose covert political operations but agrees that secrecy is needed to protect agents who gather military, economic and other types of intelligence.

In the issue carrying the 100 names, former CIA agent and author Philip Agee said in an article, "The most effective and important systematic efforts to combat CIA that can be undertaken right now are, I think, the identification, exposure and neutralization of its people working abroad."

Agee said CIA people "can be identified and exposed through periodic bulletins disseminated to subscribers, particularly individuals and organizations in the foreign country in question."

This would enable "people victimized by the CIA" to apply pressure to have them expelled, Agee said.

THE FOLLOWING article printed the 100 names partly in keeping with Agee's statement, it said.

But Porter now says Fifth Estate disagrees with Agee's advice that CIA agents' names be distributed abroad and says no one in Greece was on the mailing list of "Counter-Spy."

Fifth Estate's budget is about \$20,000 a year, Porter said, about half from sale of "Counter-Spy" and about half from contributions, mail fund appeals and lecture proceeds.

Asked if Fifth Estate had ever received money from a known Communist group or any group that publicly advocates overthrow of the government, Porter replied, "No — and we wouldn't accept that kind of money."